



Aruba welcomes CATA delegates with a fabulous beach party at the Occidental Grand

Delegates of the Conferencia Anual de Turismo de Aruba (CATA,) arrived on Wednesday and were welcomed with an opening night beach party at the Occidental Grand Resort, allowing them to sample something of the vacation experience the island will deliver to their clients. Mario Arends of the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) informed that over seventy representatives of five airlines and twenty-nine major tour companies from all reaches of Latin and Central America are attending this year's conference.

There will be three days of networking and exploring Aruba during the CATA event, and since many of the delegates are veteran visitors to the island, the hosts to the numerous inspections, workshops, and events are focusing on all that is new regarding Aruba, which has seen an investment of over 350 million dollars by public and private agencies in its tourist product over the past few years.

A beach party held at the Occidental Grand, which completed major renovations and reopened in the past year, was a perfect way to showcase what is current and exciting in food and entertainment. Delegates were joined by Aruban marketing executives along with ATA staff and members of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) for an elegant and entertaining evening on the beach that featured a culinary tour around the world, whisking the attendees off to the Orient, Mexico or France at each of the food stations.

Occidental General Manager Jesus Cardoso acted as host for the evening along with Aruba's Minister of Tourism and Transport, Edison Briesen. In a very entertaining address, the personable hotelier expressed thanks to Mylene Marques of the ATA and Irene Perez of De Palm Tours DMS for organizing a beautiful welcome event.

Aside from experiencing the best of Aruban hospitality, they were also entertained by the energetic and talented dance troupe of the Occidental Grand, under the stewardship of Activities Director Omar Chavez. The dancers soon had the delegates competing as representatives of their home country in some of the region's most fun ways of audience participation, and Maria Victoria Galan, who represents the ATA in Colombia, was judged the best dancer and awarded a singular and beautiful trophy for her performance.

The following three days are hectic and purposeful for the CATA attendees, as they inspect the island's resorts and activities while networking with vacation specialists. This year will include a lecture by guest speaker Dr. Luis Vicente León of Datanalisis, an independent Venezuelan polling firm, on the topic "Economic Development in Latin America." Wednesday night was reserved for a delightful way to get acquainted with fellow delegates and representatives of Aruba's tourism industry presenting all those attending CATA 2008 with "the best of the best" that Aruba and its resorts has to offer, reaffirming for all why it is a preferred destination for their clients.